

Educators often see GREAT as a valuable tool for younger children. However, even they do not always agree that it reduces gang membership. Generally, the more gang-ridden an area that the school is in, the less belief there is that GREAT can affect gangs (Peterson & Esbensen, 2004). However, the GREAT program does receive community support, and is often viewed as a worthwhile investment given its low cost.

Unfortunately, its worth does not appear to include reducing the gang problem. Education-centric programs could be useful if delivered to a targeted audience and inclusive of specific examples. Gang and gang member biographies, which in most cases have tragic endings, can serve as a more effective deterrent than general gang research in that biographies create a personalized account and a real world example. These sorts of books are becoming increasingly available and could be beneficial in certain educational programs.

T. Teens on Target (TNT)

Teens on Target (TNT) is a non-profit initiative started in Oakland, California that has been in operation since 1989. This program began at a time when gun violence and gang activity were on the rise. The goal of TNT is to prevent violence (primarily involving guns) through intervention with at-risk youth. The program takes junior and senior-high school students and teaches them how to become leaders amongst their peers and advocates for non-violence. It includes weekly workshops and the use of positive role models. To date, the TNT program reports having trained over 800 peer educators and reached over 40,000 students in Oakland and Los Angeles – where a sister program is in place (TNT Homepage, 2007).

The TNT program claims a near 100 percent graduation rate for high school peer educators, as well as being involved in several anti-gun